

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS

XMT AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 092378

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE WASHDC INFO ADDIS ABABA
DAKAR, LAGOS, LONDON, PARIS, EC BRUSSELS MAY 12, 1973 FROM
ABIDJAN IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 3345

DEPT PASS OTHER AFRICAN DIP POSTS AS DESIRED

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, EEC, XA

SUBJ: O/ AU/ ECA/ AFDB AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ABIDJAN
MAY 9-13

REF: ABIDJAN 3343

1. PARTICIPANTS AND OBSERVERS ALIKE ARE WONDERING WHETHER THIS
CONFERENCE (TERMED AFRICA' S ECONOMIC CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION BY
IVORY COAST PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET- BOIGNY) WILL IN FACT PROVE TO HAVE
BEEN AN HISTORIC EVENT OR JUST ANOTHER MEETING QUICKLY FORGOTTEN.

2. NUMBER OF COMPETENT OBSERVERS INCLUDING LE MONDE' S PIERRE
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BIARNES LEAN TO LATTER CONCLUSION, FEELING THAT RHETORIC HAS BEEN SUBSTITUTE FOR SUBSTANCE AND THAT THERE ARE TOO MANY DIVERGENT INTERESTS TO BRING TOGETHER IN SUCH A LARGE FORUM. BESIDES, ANY REALLY IMPORTANT ISSUES, IN THIS VIEW, WILL BE DEFERRED TO OAU SUMMIT IN ADDIS LATER THIS MONTH.

3. EVEN LE MONDE, HOWEVER, WILL NO DOUBT HERALD PROPOSED CHARTER EXPECTED TO BE ISSUED TOMORROW BEFORE CLOSE OF CONFERENCE AS IMPORTANT EFFORT TO MAKE AFRICA' S VOICE HEARD, WITH AS MUCH UNITY AND INSISTENCE AS POSSIBLE, IN GREAT ISSUES OF THE DAY IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE, MONETARY AND AID NEGOTIATIONS.

4. KEYNOTE THROUGHOUT THE CONFERENCE HAS CERTAINLY BEEN THAT AFRICA SHOULD DRIVE A MUCH HARDER BARGAIN WITH REST OF WORLD, PARTICULARLY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, THAT IT HAS IN THE PAST. ONE COMPETENT FRENCH TECHNICAL OBSERVER TOLD ME HE THINKS SUCCESS OF TOUGH TACTICS BY OIL- PRODUCING COUNTRIES HAS BEEN IN BACK OF MINDS OF AFRICAN DELEGATES, WHO HE SAYS HAVE VIRTUALLY ALL FOCUSSED ON THREE AIN ISSUES - FORTHCOMING INTERNATIONAL MONETARY NEGOTIATIONS, NEXT ROUND OF GATT NEGOTIATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (AID AND TRADE) GENERALLY. ALL HAVE INSISTED ON THE BROAD PRINCIPLE OF AFRICAN UNITY IN DEFENSE OF COMMON AFRICAN INTERESTS IN CONFRONING THE REST OF THE WORLD. SAME FRENCH OBSERVER THINKS THAT IF AFRICANS CAN PUT INTO IRRACTICAL APPLICATION THEIR EVIDENT DETERMINATION ON BROAD PRINCIPLES TO BE ENUNCIATED IN CHARTER, THIS ABIDJAN CONFERENCE WILL IN RETROSPECT PROVE TO HAVE BEEN VERY HISTORIC OCCASION AND THAT DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, ITS PRINCIPAL TARGETS, WILL DO WELL TO TAKE NOTE OF WHAT AFRICANS ARE NOW SAYING.

5. PRESIDENT LABIDI OF AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, ONE OF PRINCIPAL PROMOTERS OF CONFERENCE, MADE IT CLEAR TO ME LAT NIGHT HE HOPES US AND OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WILL INDEED TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY WHAT AFRICANS ARE SAYING. HE SAYS OBSERVERS LIKE BIARNES WHO ARE NEGATIVE MISS THE POINT AND THINK CONFERENCE IS ALL ABOUT AFRICAN RELATIONS WITH EC. LABIDI SAYS CONFERENCE IS FAR BROADER AND MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT, AS TIME WILL SHOW AND AS WEALTHY COUNTRIES WILL IGNORE ONLY TO THEIR GREAT REGRET. LABIDI, WHILE OBVIOUSLY SINCERE, HAS OF COURSE A VESTED INTEREST IN PURVEYING SUCH A VIEW.

6. SUB- COMMITTEE WHICH IS EDITING THE AFRICAN CHARTER MET UNTIL FIVE AM SATURDAY MORNING AND WILL BE WORKING MOST OF TODAY. EAST
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AFRICANS AND OTHER COMMONWEALTH DELEGATES EXPECTED SUBSTANTIVE WORK WOULD HAVE ENDED TODAY AND PLANNED LEAVE ABIDJAN. HOWEVER, IN VIEW DIFFERENCES OF OPINION WHICH HAVE DEVELOPED BETWEEN THEM

AND FRANCOPHONES, THEY CANCELLED AIRLINE RESERVATIONS AND NOW INTENT REMAIN UNTIL CHARTER IS IN FINAL FORM. ALTHOUGH CHARTER WILL PROBABLY NOT EVEN MENTION EEC BY NAME, THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE IS SAID BY ONE OF ITS MEMBERS TO BE WELL AWARE THAT EVERYTHING RELATES TO THE COMING NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE EEC, AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE CLASHING MIGHT BE EXPECTED, OVER ISSUE OF RECIPROCITY IN NEW AGREEMENT OF ASSOCIATION WITH EEC. THE ANGLOPHONES ARE BITTERLY RESISTING REVERSE PREFERENCES, AND SENEGAL, ON THE OTHER END OF THE SCALE, IS SEEKING TO LINK AID RECEIVED FROM THE EEC WITH TRADE CONCESSIONS.

7. IT IS PERHAPS WORTH NOTING FURTHER THAT OPENING ADDRESSES AT CONFERENCE (WILL WILL BE POUCHING FULL TEXTS), NOT ONLY OF OAU SYG EGANKAKI BUT ALSO OF USUALLY MODERATE HOUPHOUET HIMSELF, WERE VERY HARD- HITTING ON DISADVANTAGES AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN SUFFERING IN ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH WEALTHY COUNTRIES AND IN AFFIRMING DETERMINATION TO PUT AN END TO T IS STATE OF AFFAIRS.

8. EMBASSY NOT YET PREPARED TO SAY WHETHER ABIDJAN CONFERENCE WILL GO DOWN AS ONE OF GREAT MOMENTS OF HISTORY BUT IT PROMISES TO BE SOMETHING MORE, WHATEVER THE IMMEDIATE APPEARANCES, THAN A MERE RHETORICAL JAMBOREE. IT ALREADY REFLECTS THE EVOLUTION OF A NEW, TOUGHER ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE AFRICANS AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE AT LEAST IS THEREFORE NOT TO BE UNDER-ESTIMATED.

ROOT
UNQUOTE RUSH

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